

Application No. 10/663,979

JUL 13 2007

Art Unit: 3714

## AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

5      **Listing of Claims:**

Claims 1-28 (Previously Cancelled).

Claim 29 (Currently Amended): A method of playing a slot machine game using a symbol matrix formed by a plurality of rows intersecting with a plurality of columns, with the plurality of rows and columns including a plurality of symbols, comprising:

- 10
- a) a player making a wager to play the game;
  - b) randomly rearranging the plurality of symbols;
  - c) displaying the rearranged symbols in the symbol matrix;
  - d) automatically expanding wildcard symbols, if displayed in the symbol matrix, in  
15      all of the predetermined directions associated with each said wildcard symbol;
  - e) always replacing the symbol(s) in the path of an expanding wildcard symbol with the expanding wildcard symbol; and
  - f) issuing awards for winning symbol combinations following the expansion of all  
20      wildcard symbols.

Claim 30 (Currently Amended): The method of Claim 29 in which the directional indicia for a wildcard symbol assigns ~~is assigned~~ one or more of the following predetermined directions:

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- a) upwards from the symbol position in which the wildcard symbol appears;
- b) downwards from the symbol position in which the wildcard symbol appears;
- c) leftwards from the symbol position in which the wildcard symbol appears;
- d) rightwards from the symbol position in which the wildcard symbol appears; or
- 5 e) diagonally from the symbol position in which the wildcard symbol appears.

Claim 31 (Currently Amended): The method of Claim 29 in which a wildcard symbol expands N symbol positions, from the symbol position in which the wildcard symbol appears towards the predetermined direction(s) assigned by the directional indicia displayed assigned to on the  
10 wildcard symbol, with N indicated on the wildcard symbol and with N calculated in one of the  
following manners:

- a) N is a fixed number;
- b) N is a random number; or
- c) N is a random number selected from a range of numbers.

15 Claim 32 (New): The method of Claim 29 in which letters or words are used as directional indicia displayed on the wildcard symbols.

20 Claim 33 (New): The method of Claim 29 in which arrows are used as directional indicia displayed on the wildcard symbols.